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ABSTRACT

The Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs is charged with the investigation and development of a comprehensive National Nutrition Policy for the United States. The National Nutrition Consortium--representing four major scientific and professional societies, the membership of which have responsibilities for developing, through research, new knowledge in nutrition and food science in relation to man's needs for health--has addressed itself to preparation of guidelines for a National Nutrition Policy. These are presented in order to identify the many considerations to be brought into focus in effective longrange governmental planning and implementation of programs for foods and nutrition in relation to the Nation's health and other national responsibilities. A stated National Nutritional Policy is needed to ensure that food will be available to provide an adequate diet at a reasonable cost to every person within the United States. It is needed to fulfill our commitments as a Nation--in cooperation with other nations and international organizations--in planning and devising measures for provision of adequate food for the expanding world population. Consortium members include The American Institute of Nutrition, The American Society for Clinical Nutrition, The American Dietetic Association, and The Institute of Food Technology. (Author/JM)

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GUIDELINES FOR A NATIONAL NUTRITION POLICY

A WORKING PAPER

PREPARED BY THE

NATIONAL NUTRITION CONSORTIUM, INC.

FOR THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION
AND HUMAN NEEDS
UNITED STATES SENATE



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Index to Hearings During 93d Cong., 1st Sess.

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INTRODUCTION

The Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs is charged with the investigation and development of a comprehensive National Nutrition Policy for the United States. In the past 4 years, great attention has been paid to nutrition as an important public policy question. Significant investigations have been made in a number of Federal feeding programs, and new innovative programs have been initiated.

Additionally, other actions on a broad range of nutrition concerns have been taken throughout the Federal Government and in the private sector. The Food and Drug Administration has moved in the area of food labeling and food safety. The Federal Trade Commission is seriously investigating the area of food advertising. Research into basic nutrition, and the relationship between nutrition and disease is beginning to be understood and may provide some important answers to major health problems many Americans face today.

An overriding question of concern that has come to the fore, in the past year, is the question of adequate food availability. It is apparent to those who have been following developments in the area of nutrition and public policy that we have reached a point where we must begin to face broad, but very basic, policy decisions.

How is the Federal Government to be organized to deal with these various nutrition questions?

Which are the concerns that are most important?

What kind of remedial legislation is necessary?

What types of Executive actions can be taken?

What can the private sector do that does not require Government action at all?

The National Nutrition Consortium—an organization eminently qualified to deal with these kinds of questions—has been studying this problem for some time. I am delighted that they have provided the Select Committee with the fruits of their work, "Guidelines for a National Nutrition Policy." I am especially delighted that the Select Committee is publishing the Consortium's guidelines in advance of our hearings in June of this year on National Nutrition Policy. I believe that the Consortium's guidelines can serve as a valuable document for all of those participating in the Select Committee's study and hearings.

GEORGE MCGOVERN, *Chairman.*

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P R E F A C E

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Toward a National Nutrition Policy

The past year may represent a turning point in history. Numerous developments including the energy crisis, inflation, rising food costs and depletion of our food reserves have convinced many knowledgeable people that we are now entering an era which will be characterized by a shortage of resources including food. The high energy cost of producing food makes it clear that food and the energy supply are inextricably linked. For the first time, the capacity of the United States to feed itself and meet its world food commitments is being seriously questioned. A world food crisis exists at this time, and this will have serious repercussions in this country.

The first requirement of a food supply is that it provide a nutritionally adequate diet for the population. We must first supply what we need even if we cannot supply what we want.

New attitudes, priorities, and a restructuring of responsible governmental agencies and their programs will be required if we are to deal effectively with food and nutrition problems that we face now and in the future. We must create the social and political climate which will make this possible and this will be a complex process. This statement on a national nutrition policy by the National Nutrition Consortium indicates the essential components of such a policy and we urge that action be taken now to initiate its development.

D. Mark Hegsted
Chairman, Board of Directors

April 1974

FOREWORD

Governments are established in order that man, through his collective efforts, may fulfill his needs for survival and security; and, with increasing affluence, enjoy the benefits and comforts that arise from shared abundance. To accomplish this, high priority must be given to protection of the individual by assuring him the best opportunity of procuring and utilizing food to fulfill his basic needs.

The costs of meeting these needs and the level of abundance at which they are fulfilled vary with the socioeconomic, cultural, and technologic level of a particular society. Indeed, these features are everchanging as a society evolves from its early primitive structure—concerned primarily with survival and security—to the complex, technologically developed, affluent organization as currently exists in North American and European countries. In these latter societies, the majority of the population is concerned with maintaining the standards of health, comfort, convenience and enjoyment that are unattainable by less developed societies. Governments of the highly developed societies have recognized new responsibilities of food supply, quality assurance and health protection that arise with developing technology.

Large-scale technological production of foodstuffs has created unique circumstances that require new systems of regulations and monitoring; and new understanding by the public in order to attain maximum benefits with minimal risks.

From the founding of this Government, in 1776 to the present, the United States has grown from a population of 3 million to over 200 million. The high standard of living and level of health of the Nation are results of technologic development. The technologic application of science in agriculture makes it possible for less than 4 percent of the population to produce the abundant agricultural supply of this Nation—in striking contrast to the earlier situation, and that pertaining today in developing countries, where 60 percent to 80 percent of the population are engaged in agriculture with living and health standards in marked contrast to those of the United States.

Accordingly, a concise statement of a National Nutrition Policy is timely and desirable. The National Nutrition Consortium—representing four major scientific and professional societies,¹ the membership of which have responsibilities for developing, through research, new knowledge in nutrition and food science in relation to man's needs for health—has addressed itself to preparation of guidelines for

¹ The American Institute of Nutrition, The American Society for Clinical Nutrition, The American Dietetic Association, and The Institute of Food Technology. The organizations have a combined membership of approximately 40,000 scientifically trained professionals.

a National Nutrition Policy. These are presented in order to identify the many considerations to be brought into focus in effective long-range governmental planning and implementation of programs for foods and nutrition in relation to the Nation's health and other national responsibilities.

I. NEED FOR A STATED NATIONAL NUTRITION POLICY

A stated National Nutrition Policy is needed to ensure that food will be available to provide an adequate diet at a reasonable cost to every person within the United States. Food to provide good nutrition is a fundamental need of every member of society. In order that he may utilize food to greatest benefit, the individual must have some basic understanding of food and nutrition in relation to requirements for health—including information concerning the products which he purchases.

Nutrient *requirements* of the population should be defined and translated into terms of food in developing plans for food production at the agricultural and manufacturing level. The nutritional contribution of foods as well as their economic importance must receive consideration. Agricultural and nutritional policies should be coordinated. The production of sufficient food to fulfill the needs of all segments of the population must be accompanied by an adequate distribution system. The quality and safety of the food supply must be assured by quality control of production and by regulatory controls and surveillance.

A National Nutrition Policy is needed to fulfill our commitments as a Nation—in cooperation with other nations and international organizations—in planning and devising measures for provision of adequate food for the expanding world population. This includes the maintenance of adequate world reserves of food, provision of technical assistance to developing nations, participation in world trade and assistance in provision of foods in emergency situations are important aspects of international nutrition responsibilities.

II. GOALS OF A NATIONAL NUTRITION POLICY

The goals of a National Nutrition Policy should be to:

1. Assure an adequate wholesome food supply at reasonable cost to meet the needs of all segments of the population. This supply to be available at a level consistent with the affordable lifestyle of the era.
2. Maintain food resources sufficient to meet emergency needs; and to fulfill a responsible role as a Nation in meeting world food needs.
3. Develop a level of sound public knowledge and responsible understanding of nutrition and foods that will promote maximal nutritional health.
4. Maintain a system of quality and safety control that justifies public confidence in its food supply.
5. Support research and education in foods and nutrition with adequate resources and reasoned priorities to solve important current problems and to permit exploratory basic research.

III. MEASURES TO ATTAIN GOALS

To attain these goals, it is essential to:

1. Maintain surveillance of the nutritional status of the population and determine the nature of nutritional problems observed.
2. Develop programs within the health care system that will prevent and rectify nutritional problems.
3. Assist the health professions in coordinated efforts to improve the nutritional status of the population through the life cycle.
4. Develop programs for nutrition education for both health professionals and the general public.
5. Identify areas in which nutrition knowledge is inadequate, and foster research to provide this knowledge.
6. Assemble information on the food supply—including food production and distribution—and provide a nutritional input in the regulation of foreign agricultural trade.
7. Determine the nutrient composition of foods and promote and monitor food quality and safety.
8. Cooperate with other nations and international agencies in developing measures for solving the world's food and nutrition problems.

IV. PROGRAMS NEEDED TO MEET OBJECTIVES

Seven major phases are needed; they are:

1. The nutritional status of all segments of the United States population should be monitored continuously with periodic national reporting of:
 - a. the prevalence of specific nutritional problems;
 - b. the effects of various preventive and remedial programs on nutritional status and on prevalence of nutritional problems; and,
 - c. food consumption of various population groups..
2. Nutrition programs should be established and expanded in the Health Care system, giving consideration to the following points:
 - a. Maintenance of good nutrition in all segments of the population should be promoted through Health Care Centers—clinics, hospitals, neighborhood centers—which should be responsible for nutritional diagnosis and counselling. Good nutritional practices should be an integral part of services in nursing homes, day care centers, orphanages, prisons and other institutions.
 - b. Alleviation of malnutrition in disadvantaged groups is of high priority. These groups include the poor, those at high risk, infants, pregnant women, the elderly, migrant workers and other minority groups. Programs may include food stamps, commodity distribution, food supplements, and school feeding programs.
 - c. The prevention and therapy of nutritional problems is a *continuing* public health responsibility. Current problems include anemia, obesity, delayed growth and development of

children, mild or potential vitamin deficiencies, and nutritional problems related to a wide variety of disease states such as coronary artery disease, malabsorption syndromes and other gastrointestinal disorders, inborn errors of metabolism, diabetes, allergic conditions and renal disease.

d. Programs should include provision of a nutrition component in all Health Care Centers in all geographic areas. Nutrition services should be under the direction—at some level—of a professional with competence in nutrition or dietetics.

Provision of nutrition services should be included in plans for benefits provided by National Health Insurance.

e. Nutrition centers of excellence for diagnosis, treatment, research and training should be established in various parts of this country.

3. Nutrition information should be incorporated into all levels of formal education.

a. In schools: Nutrition should be a basic curriculum requirement in all elementary schools and high schools.

The School Lunch Program should be used to assist in nutrition education through correlation with teaching in the classroom.

All teachers should receive training in nutrition.

Courses in nutrition should be available in colleges and universities.

b. Training of nutrition professionals and paraprofessionals, physicians, dietitians, public health nutritionists, dentists, nurses, veterinarians, social workers, physical education teachers and health educators should have high priority. Both undergraduate and postgraduate training is needed, as well as continuing education.

Medical schools should be encouraged to establish faculty and resources for teaching nutrition in clinical as well as preclinical departments; and nutrition training and services should be promoted in hospitals and clinics.

The Land Grant Universities should continue and expand training in the areas of food and nutrition.

c. Sound nutrition information for the general public should be carried out through all components of the communications media—including Federal, State and local departments of education, cooperative State Extension Services, colleges and universities, community agencies, industry and the mass media.

Food labeling and food advertising can contribute significantly to nutrition knowledge. Labeling and advertising regulations should require presentation of truthful nutrition information in all instances where nutritional claims are made.

Nutrition education can be incorporated in such programs as the Food Stamp Program and in supplementary feeding programs.

4. Nutrition research should be supported at all levels. Basic and applied research in nutrition are both essential for solving current and future problems.

Research should be supported in colleges and universities, in nutrition centers of excellence, in health care facilities, in special institutes, in industry and in the Federal agencies. Support for training of nutrition scientists to conduct such research should have high priority.

Among the agencies with responsibilities for nutrition-related research are the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, the Veterans' Administration, the Department of Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Research support should be provided for all areas of food production, processing and use.

The experiment stations in the 50 States have responsibilities for research in both food science and experimental nutrition. Food science and human nutrition deserve especially high priorities.

Coordination of nutrition research activities among all departments and divisions of the government is highly desirable.

5. Food production and distribution in the United States and in other parts of the world should be considered from the standpoint of nutritional policy.

Increased agricultural production should be encouraged, including greater yields, and development of new genetic types of food with improved nutrient content.

More beneficial distribution of foods should be planned.

Food reserves should be established and maintained.

Priorities in international trade in agricultural commodities should be planned to make the best use of supplies to meet the needs in the United States and in developing countries of the world.

6. Nutrient composition, quality and safety of foods deserve continuous study and assessment.

The development of wholesome new foods such as formulated, fabricated and convenience foods, as well as the fortification of foods should be encouraged.

Informative food labeling can aid in educating the consumer in nutrition, and can assist him in his choice of foods, so that a good diet can be obtained.

Research in food science and technology has an important role in the total nutrition program and is a responsibility of Government, as well as of industry and academic institutions.

Regulation of food quality and safety is an essential aspect of a National Nutrition Program. Periodic review of regulatory controls permits changes as needed.

Research in all aspects of the quality and safety of foods should receive high priority.

7. Programs to fulfill the responsibilities of the United States as a Nation to other countries, in cooperation with national and international agencies, should be a permanent part of the Nation's policy.

In view of the high prevalence of malnutrition throughout the developing countries of the world and the rapidly expanding population, the critical areas are:

- population control and family planning;
- food production;
- food science and technology;
- economic development;
- knowledge of nutritional science and applied nutrition;
- social and cultural changes; and,
- education.

These areas require financial support and technical assistance by this country, other developed nations and international groups, industry, foundations, philanthropic organizations and private citizens.

V. REQUIREMENTS TO ESTABLISH AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT

An effective plan for establishing and implementing a National Nutrition Policy should provide for the following:

1. Formation of a food and nutrition policy board at a high level in the Government.

2. Establishment of an Office of Nutrition or a National Nutrition Center to develop plans and programs for implementation of a National Nutrition Policy.

An Advisory Nutrition Council or Board composed of representatives of various organizations with special competence in dealing with food and nutrition problems should be formed to advise the Office of Nutrition (National Nutrition Center) in planning and evaluating a National Nutrition Program.

Responsibilities and activities of the Office of Nutrition (National Nutrition Center) should include:

- a. Identification and coordination of food and nutrition programs in various governmental agencies.

- b. Provision for continuing food and nutrition surveillance.

This should include: (1) monitoring of the food supply; (2) continuing general surveys of the nutritional status of the population; (3) in-depth studies of specific public health problems related to nutrition; and, (4) continuing accumulation of information relative to food consumption and food composition.

Some or all of these activities could be assigned to appropriate organizations or agencies.

The surveillance system should be designed to utilize not only survey sources but also centers of health services and education, monitoring efforts of Federal and State government agencies, health insurance programs and similar sources of reliable information.

- c. Establishment of a nutrition information service.

Nutrition resources and programs for information gathering at State and local levels should be supported and strengthened. State and local nutrition offices should be incorporated into a nationally coordinated nutrition information service.

- d. Periodic evaluation of nutrition policy and program.

3. Development of centers of excellence for food and nutrition research and for the diagnosis and treatment of nutritional health problems.

4. Establishment of programs for the support of extramural research and education in universities, research institutes and similar organizations—including special support for centers of excellence in research and education in human nutrition.

5. Development of programs and resources to encourage, nationwide, the incorporation of sound information concerning foods and nutrition into public school education at all levels from preschool through high school, college and university curricula, and into materials used by the communications media.

Broad support should be provided for teaching nutrition in health professional schools—medical, dental, public health and allied health professions—and in colleges of teacher education.

6. Coordination of international aspects of the National Nutrition Program with the Agency for International Development, international programs of other branches of the Federal Government, also with international agencies such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and others.

Finally, the National Nutrition Consortium urges responsible officials and Members of the Congress to consider such policy as a whole, and give appropriate priorities to necessary legislation and funding.

